A Strange and Wonderful

RELATION

OF THE

OLD WOMAN

WHO WAS DROWNED AT

Ratcliffe Highway,

A FORTNIGHT AGO.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

The Old Woman's Dream a little after her Death.

PART THE FIRST.

PRINTED BY HOWARD AND EVANS, 42, LONG-LANE, WEST-SMITHFIELD, LONDON.

THE

FIRST PART

OF THE

OLD WOMAN

OF

Ratcliff Highway.

IT was last Monday morning about four o'clock in the afternoon, before sun-rising, going over Highgate hill, I asked him if the Old woman was dead that was drowned at Ratclift Highway a fortnight ago. He told me he could not tell but if I went a little farther I should meet with two young men on horseback, riding

under a mare, in a blue red jerkin, and a pair of white free-stone breeches, and they would give intelligence. So when I came up to the woman she thought I was a true Hector, that was come to rob them, and therefore ran to me, but I most furiously pursued before them, so that one of them for mere madness, seeing him dead drew out his sword and perfectly killed himself. The horse for vexation seeing himself dead, ran away as fast as he could, leaving them to go on foot upon another horse's back forty miles —Friend, quoth I, I mean you no good, but pray inform me if the old woman be dead yet that was drowned at Ratcliff Highway, a fortnight ago? they told me they could not tell, but if I went a little farther I should meet with two young women driving an empty cart full of apples, and a mill stone in the midst, and they would give me no particular intelligence. But when I came up with her they would satisfy me at any rate; and told me if I went down to the wafer side there lived one Sir John Vang, and he would give me true intelligence.—So going to the water side, I hooped and hallowed, but I could make nobody see.—At last I heard eighty

country lads and lasses, who were all fast asleep, playing at shuve pins under a hay cock, piled up of pea straw in the middle of the Thames and eating of a roasted bag pudding freezing hot. But at last I met with two she watermen that carried me clean over the water, and landed me up to mp chin in water on dry land. And when we were got out of the water, and stuck in the mud I asked for Sir John Vang's house.

At last I arrived at Sir John Vang's house. It is a little house entirely alone

encompassed with about forty or fifty houses, having a brick wall made of flint stone round about it. So knocking at the door, Gammer Vang, said I, is Sir John Vang within. Walk in, said she, and you shall find him in a little, great, round, oval, three- square, parlour.——This Gammer Vang had a little old woman his son.

Her mother was a justice of the peace, but when I came into the said great, little,

middle sized, square, round, three-cornered, oval parlor, I could not see Sir John Vang for he was a giant; but I espied

abundance of small, wicker bottles, and just as I was going out, he called to me, and asked me what I would have? So

looking back I espied him just creeping out of a wicker bottle, it seems by his profession he made them, and crept out of the stopper holes. Sir John Vang, said I, pray is the Old Woman dead that was drowned at Ratcliff Highway a fort'night ago, or not? No, sure, said he, she would have sent me word, if she had been dead, for she is a near kinsman of mine.—But I confess, said he, if I had lived to this day I had been dead seven years ago. Well, Sir John Vang, Good bye then, said I, for I must be satisfied before I can well be contented.

No, said Sir John Vang, you shall not go before you have dined, for I have a loin of pork, and a hind quarter of lamb of a calf's cow for supper, and a sack posset made of white wine vinegar. And when we have dined I will shew you my iron pear tree.

After we had dined and eaten up what we left, we put up for breakfast the morning before.

Presently after six country gentlemen played at nine pins with turnips in a leg of pork, and never greased their cloaths.

Then Sir John Vang would shew me the great wonder, I must go into the cel-

lar, and drink a cup of bread and cheese with him. So we went into the cellar seven stories high. Hand Swift, said I, he is too little to be good for any thing.

You are mistaken, said he, the dog Swift killed me a hare to-morrow. I'll be hanged then, said I. Come along with me,

said he, you shall see her dead in the basket. Hold a little, quoth I, this is a bull; OLD GO, a gigantic bald head man, about five feet, one inch, and three quarters, at this remark laughed so hearty that his WIG fell off!!! meantime I continued your dog swift has killed a hare. go along with you and I shall see it alive in the basket. No, you fool, quoth Ken, a black ox, and a pair of cods between his legs, that's a bull.

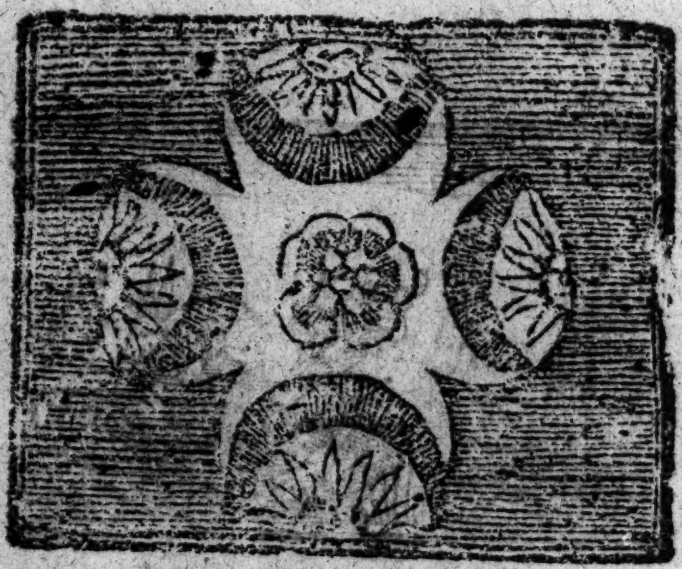
Having drank bread and cheese enough I went to see this wonder; it was a child

about, three months old thrashing tobacco in a well.

Going there afterwards, he went into the room and out of another before we could come to the well.

The first room into which we entered, I saw three of his two daughters spinning

of charcoal, and in another room twenty cleaving three split deal boards to make card matches of, on a very dark sunshiny night.



On coming to the orchard, Sir John Vang shewed me the iron pear tree, and I gathered as many roasted apples off thence

as six and forty men could eat, and I eat them all myself in the twinkling of an eye. Close by the said pear-tree was a ditch full of cream, where abundance of frogs were forging of gunpowder.

But when he came to the well, the little whipper-snippers but three month's old, were thrashing with such force, that she struck a corn of tobacco out of

a little cod through a broad wall one yard thick, and so killed a dog on the other side of the wall; I heard it bark afterwards. Wondering what the business was, I leaped over a wall, which I could easily do, for it was no higher than this

church steeple, and seeing the dog dead, I run my hand down his throat, and took him

by the tail, and turned him inside out. So the dog ran down Bucklersbury, and I for my security leaped into Greenwich Park.

But roving the Park, at last I met with Toby the huntsman's wife. How now Toby, said I, what sport? Brave sport last night said she but better this morning. Why what sport last night, ? Toby, said I.

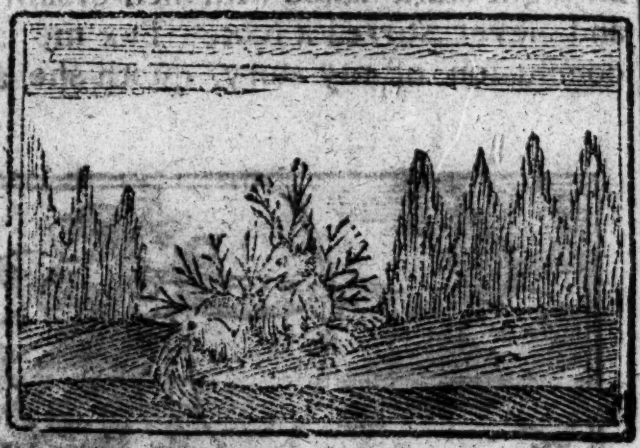
Oh! there came a fellow in the Park, said she, an I up with my quarter staff, and cut

off both his ears at one blow. How can that be? said I, the dam of that is a whisk.

Nay, quoth she, take me in the conclusion of my story, and if I do not make it appear to be true, then believe me. Never sport this morning then, said I. There were, said she, six very nice country lasses dancing all night stark naked with their cloathes on and never stirred a foot. Tax me in the conclusion of my story, quoth she again

and if I do not make it appear to be true believe me every word I say. Now just as she was going to tell me how it was performed, she shot a buck dead with an

arrow although it did not even touch him. Toby did much value the buck, but the



arrow she most esteemed, the loss of which put Toby to a nonplus. Now it seems close by was a fish pond, and just as she shot a pike six yards long leaping at a fly alive; but for all this Toby would not lose her arrow. At last she found it stuck in a hollow tree: she pulled it out, for the whore had killed a bee's nest, so wiping her arrow on the grass, she sprung a covey of partridges, some say she killed nine, but I

am sure she killed eleven of them, besides a pheasant which stood perching on a tree.

But for the rest it is at present too tedious for me to repeat.

So for the present you shall be amused with the portrait of Sir John Vang in the in the character of a Shepherd. Behold the blade, ha! ha! what a rum Gill!!

Before long Sir John Vang, Mr. Nobe, and Mr, Do-little, will give a particular account whether or no the Old woman be dead, or whether she be alive that was drowned at Ratcliff Highway a fortnight ago.

But behold I had almost forgotten to give an account how Toby struck off the

man's ears at one blow. Now thus it was as Toby informs me: The fellow came to steal venison, and had a helmet upon his head and she up with her quarter staff and cleft his helmet, so that one half came down on one side of his head, and the other half on the other side, and so carried away both his ears at once. This may very well be, said I. Why then, said she, the rest may be as possible as this.

One of the men Old Bartholomew by name, who lived in Ratcliff Highway, just as you go to Brentford, was horribly enamoured, of a fair maid, a gardener's man and swore if he had it at home, he would make goose pye for his wife, who lived at Thistleworth. She was a handsome young man, about seventy eight years of age, and was very notable for having a great crumpled shoulder; the virtue of which almost attracted it to his head or higher, and when he fed himself, he was said to feed like a calf for that which he eat was always on the tender part of the tongue. This man once meeting with his sweetheart, in the middle of the green meadow, which I walked twenty miles outright to do you no good. I hold my tongue to talk to

you, replied Susan, and would go twenty miles to require the love you bear to me. But my mother is so afraid, she would not leave any place in the world to see me in the room where you are.—Why, said Bartlemy, I would have her know that I am as well able to keep you as herself, but yet I am not so rich as she is. Truly, Bartlemy, said Susan, though you know I am a very great pains-taker, yet I do love my bed as well as I love myself, and I never rise till my mother comes up, and chides me to come down to dinner.

No matter for that, replied old Bartlemy, though you lie in bed every afternoon till three o'clock in the morning, and then get up as soon as I do at twelve.

I have got a song written on purpose:

Awake, arise, pull out your eyes,
And see what time of day,
When that is done, pull out your tongue,
And try what you can say.

The Old Woman's Dream,

a short time after her death.

TWO men lying in one bed together, the one fast asleep took the keys and unlocked all the doors of the house, then he took his bow and arrows, and went into a wood or chace about a mile from the house, and killed a buck or a doe, and hid the same in a wood. Then he came home again locking the doors, laying the keys where he found them and so went to bed. Now the other man who lay awake with him followed, and saw all he acted; but he would not go to bed, but stopped to see all that was acted by the event; and as soon as the wandering sheep was again in his bed, he fell to taking his dagger, stabbing and thrusting at his bed-fellow, fearing lest he should discover him. Presently waking he said "alas! what have I done, I have killed my bed fellow." The other man said, "I am not killed yet, GOD be

praised." Nay then, said the other, I, dreamed that I had killed a buck in such a place and that you saw me both kill and hide him; and fearing lest thou shouldest betray me, I did think to kill thee but I am glad, said he, that it was but a dream." Then, said the other, "thy dream is performed except the killing of me;" which he would not believe till next day when he that had lain with him carried him to the place where the buck lay, as he had before told in his dream.

A wonderous thing it is, if it were true,
But there are other as strange things in view,
Which in the Second Part, we mean to shew.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

A Strange and Wonderful

RELATION

OF THE

OLD WOMAN

WHO WAS DROWNED AT

Ratcliffe Highway,

A FORTNIGHT AGO.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

Her last Will and Testament.

PART THE SECOND.

PRINTED BY HOWARD AND EVANS, 42, LONG-LANE, WEST-SMITHFIELD, LONDON.

THE

SECOND PART

OF THE

OLD WOMAN

OF

Ratcliff Highway.

I Shall not need tell you how the woman happened to be drowned at Ratcliff-Highway, nor how he went to enquire for her at Sir John Vang's house, or of the wonderful, strange, or uncommon sights I saw there, for all that has been told you already in the first part.

THE

SECOND PART

OF THE

OLD WOMAN

OF

Ratcliff Highway.

I Shall not need tell you how the woman happened to be drowned at Ratcliff-Highway, nor how he went to enquire for her at Sir John Vang's house, or of the wonderful, strange, or uncommon sights I saw there, for all that has been told you already in the first part.

So that hearing no tidings of her in a matter of fourteen years and seven odd days, I resolved to make a voyage to see whether she was dead or not.

So I went through the Old Exchange, just by Billingsgate, there I saw two fish-wives a scolding and fighting, and pulling one another's shoes off their heads, till they

hung about their legs. I wondered much to see such hurly burly; but I with much ado got them parted, and asked them both

what was the matter with one of them? So she told me they called her five whores, and she was but three, and that I was even five rogues for taking her part. When he perceived she should not go distracted, he gave them all the base good language that ever he was master of, nevertheless they all fell over me, and buffeted me with their perriwigs, that if the boat had not sunk under us, we should certainly all have been drowned.

Well, away he walked softly, as fast as ever he could run until the Tower came to him. When he came there the corporal of the Tower had a thimbleful of gunpowder, and put three pistol bullets into one of the biggest cannons and was just going to batter down Westminster Abbey.

Next came a man with a NOSE, which exactly resembled a PROBOSCIS or what he justly called it, an ELEPHANT'S TRUNK; he was recommending to one of the guards a preparation of his own called Proboscis, as a sovereign remedy for deformed snouts, this says Dr. Jummy will make that battered nose which you have got in the wars, as handsome as mine; and what price is it,

says the guard, oh, says Jummy, the hundreth part of fifty pound, then, says the guard, I would sooner give you the whole of fifty pound to let it alone, for by the blue pig you lately had, I never saw such a deformed Proboscis in my life—this so offended Jummy that he went away stuttering preciously, and calling out 'lo—o—ok, at m-m-m-y pr-pr-e-cious pr-pro-bos cis, an't it a p p patent one?'——

So I thought I would see his snout before I went any farther. So I went and stood behind him, to see what he did not intend to do. As soon as he was ready he brought two bushels of burning charcoal in a little wooden porringer, and put it all in his p—p—patent pr—pr—proboscis, which soon made it fire off bullets, and away flew its shot, and missed Westminster Abbey, but hit the Doctor's house which stood upon the Thames, and drove it up the river as far as Catherine-Wheel Alley.

But in the second part we must let you know, that after the old woman had made her will, and given us all she had, we must own we longed to be fingering it; but as we lived in Lambs-conduit-street, Red lion

street, and she as far as Ratcliff Highway, we could not hear from her every day—no, nor every year either.

The noise of a gun cheered my spirits, and put me into a quaking fever, so that I swooned. But when I came to myself

again, we went down to Ratcliff Highway to see the Old Woman; when we came to her, we found her at breakfast just about sun setting, upon a very good parsnip

custard, stewed green artichokes, and a dozen red herrings fried up with mutton steaks.

As soon as she saw me, she asked me where I had been these many days? and told me she never remembered me, for I had been in her mind ever since she saw me last.

I told her I had been praying for her ill fare. She thanked me for my devotion, and bid me sit down and drink up some of her victuals, which pleased me very ill, for I had eat nothing in twenty hours before.

While we were displeasing ourselves by eating some very good tobacco water, and drinking some capital mash'd potatoes seasoned with scotch snuff and buttered with kitchen stuff, I asked her if she had a husband, she said she had, and called me a pious Jacob for not having one two, why you Mosaic Israelite I have had one these thirty eleven years, he died thirty ten years ago, and was buried in the grandest stile imaginable, he was put in a sack and me and another man dragged him along the ground till we came to a pit, into which we threw the gill; pho, said the Old Woman I was only pitching you gammon for I never had a husband, so she was going up

stairs to her privy when it happened by chance that her foot slipped and she tumbled up stairs, and did happily break her neck.

When I heard the noise I went to see what was the matter. When I came to her, I perceived by her groaning that she had knocked out her fore teeth just behind. So I thought it was not any time to stand still, for fear she should catch cold, but away ran I as fast as my hands could carry me, to Westminister Hall, amongst the lawyers, where I got several surgeons, and five directors to go and see her wounds, as we went along we met a boy flying a kite.

As I was coming back again, just about dinner time, the constable and watch stand-

ing with their lanterns and their candle at noon day, he took me and clapped me up in Newgate, for walking the streets so late in the day time: I told him I had been making him a cuckold at the time that he had been on the watch.

I could not tell how to help myself, but all my care was, lest the poor old woman should cry her eyes out, because I made so much haste.

However I thought how to fit them, for when they were all fast asleep, dancing about the gallery, I very simply stole the key out of the prisoner's pocket, and so opening the gate, let out all the goalers. So away they all run, being glad they were escaped with their lives unhanged; and away I ran through the hedge and ditch, over the streets till I came to Ratcliff Highway.

But yet I made such haste that I lost the shoes off my head, and the hat off my feet. When I came there I found the Old Woman putting on her best boots and spurs and preparing for her journey.

Then I asked her if she had got any hurt with her fall? She said, she had rubbed a little skin off the inside of one of her thighs, which she shewed me, and I was glad that it was not better.

But after we had considered about our journey, it was resolved she should take shipping and go by land, and that I should

take a hackney coach, and so go by water, and so we should go together for company.

So we went into Moorfields, and got both upon one horse, and away we rid; but by good fortune my horse was a mighty deal

worse than her's. So I over rid her about three or four miles.

When we had come almost into Pancras church, she desired me to sing a merry tale. Telling her I could not sing a merry tale, but would tell her a pretty, great, little, short, long song, to pass away the time, so struck up this

DITTY.

Tune—*Hi, ho, hunt about.*

O BETTY be wary,
For fear you miscarry,
A young man hath parts to allure;
He'll first fill your belly,
And then he'll tell you,
You made not your bargain secure.

A maid that is young,
May have suitors ding dong,
And many her love will desire;
Whereas an old woman,
Is courted by no man,
For an overworn jade will soon tire.

Thus making an end of my singing she told me that my song pleased her wonderous well, on account of my speaking so much in the praise of a good old woman.

So along we walked about half a hundred miles farther, until we met a little old great bearded young man, big with child, riding a camel by running away from it.

We asked him what great city that was which stood alone, with so many towns in it? The blade told us, that it was the town of Wakefield. So we trudged till we arrived in the body of it.

When we came there we went to the sign of the Three Knitting Needles, and gave the mistress of the house our horse to set down in the dining room, and we went into the stable, and called for half a dozen of wine.

After we were not refreshed, we paid the ostler for the wine, and the tapster for the horse pie which the horse did eat. And for these both walked on horseback to Brentford, for it was above a mile further.

When we came into the middle of the town the mayor and aldermen, hearing that the right honourable her grace the Old Woman of Ratcliff Highway was coming, they all came to meet us at the town's end, in their buff coats and Spanish pantaloons.

The Old Woman having saluted some, and courted others of them, she asked one of the mayors, how her sister did?

So they told her she had been buried at least sixteen summers and seven long winters.——When she heard that she was dead she would needs go and shed just four tears and a half upon her grave for old acquaintance sake.

Having arrived at the grave which was upon the church steeple, she laughed four times and a half as she intended, and we was proceeding towards the church which stood near two miles from the churchyard where the grave was, when we met a man whom we asked our nearest way to the church, oh! said the woman, go to the bottom of that pond, and there you'll find it, the parishioners have long grumbled at its dirty condition. so it asked the parson for some soap and went to wash itself, when it overbalanced and was drowned, well said the Old Woman let's go and see, in doing so she also was drowned, and I saw her no more!————poor old dame!

When we had thus lost our labour, the Old Woman desired to hasten home, to have her fortune told, for she intended to die soon after her return.

I was in fifty hundred thousand minds, whether it would be better to go to Moses Jack's or Billy Williams's. But at the last concluding old Moses Jacks to be the best constrologer, away we went in two pair of oars and after rowing through a few miles of dry mud mixed up with elephants wings

and fishes legs we at last found them sitting on the top of a chimney at the sign of the old King's-head, Clerkenwell-green.

walking among the trees between Hackney and Chelsea, on a large barren common.

So arriving there he was informed by me, that the Old Woman of Ratcliffe Highway would needs have her fortune told; and if he did it well, he might depend on having two custards, nine roasted polonies, five pots of ale, and thirteen pipes of tobacco.

to smoke his nose with. So he passed and so did we, without meeting with any adventure. But when that he came to Ratcliff highway again, there had been a very high wind in the month of March, nearly about Whitsuntide, and which had blown down the Old Woman's cellar, where she lived, and had not left one tile under it, so that she had no place to set her head in.

Now in this great extremity she was glad to set five and twenty tailors to work to make her a garment of paduaserge. So there she lodged for that day. But she took the loss of her cellar so to heart, that the next morning at midnight, she wished me to go to the amazing cunning man to have my fortune told; he immediately went to work and then told me:——

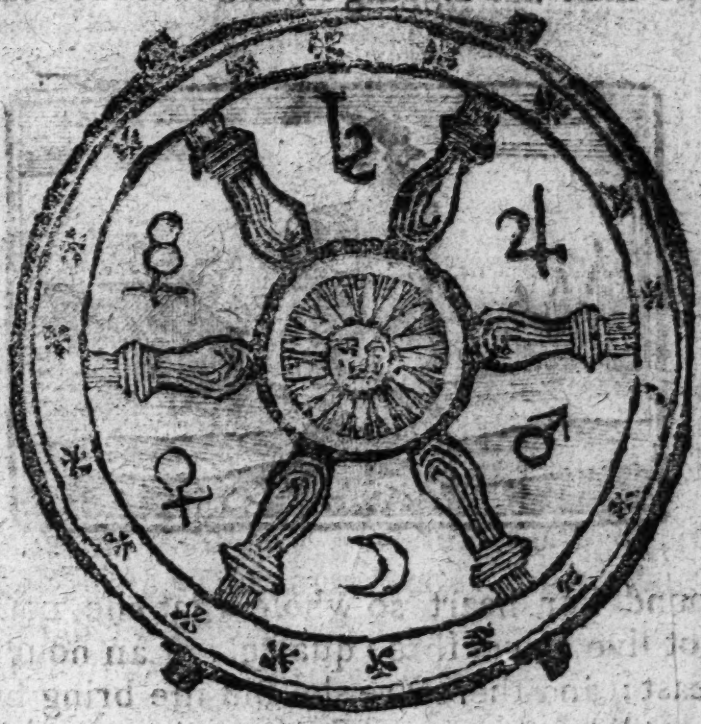
First, That she was drowned in Ratcliff-Highway.

Secondly, That she had broke her neck with tumbling up a pair of stairs.

Lastly, That her cellar was blown up by the roots.

Quoth I, any fool could easily have told me this, for we knew it already before.—

Well, quoth Jack, pray what would you have any more.—We want to know when she will die?—Why, quoth he, she will die



when she can live no longer. So this is all that the best constrologer among us all can tell you or any body else on earth.

So giving him what was promised, and returning to see how the Old Woman did; she was found just ready to change her new lodging for her grave.—She told me the man was digging it, and that she really

found her heart so whole that she could not live above three quarters of an hour at least; and therefore she bid me bring her a pot lid and a piece of charcoal, so that she might set up some legacies, which she intended to give away after her death. So bringing her the fire shovel and tongs, she begun to write as follows:

The Legacies

which the Old Woman of Ratcliff-Highway gave to her Friends after her Death.

I Confirm my good kinsman Aminidab Pumpkin to be my executor, according to my former will, and to enjoy all my estate, except these few legacies.

First, I give my grandmother's uncle four waggons and seven water mills standing in St. Paul's Church-yard.

Item, I give his grandmother's youngest daughter, three mountebank stages, one upon Tower-hill, another in Smithfield-rounds, and another in Covent-garden.

Item, I give to the keeper of the New Bridewell, two stone of rotten hemp, to make him a parcel of hemp-cord.

Item, I give to her Majesty the Queen of Sluts, my filler and hair lace, to hang her up as a public exhibition at Tyburn.

Item, I give to 'Squire Dunn, the hole of my backside, to make a whistle of.

Item, I give to Old Noll's Porter, all the hair between my great toes, to make him a perriwig.

Lastly, I give unto my cousin Proboscis a pair of anchovy-tubs to keep his stockings clean and *legs* warm——so endeth——

When I heard her so freely dispose of all her estate, she told me she would leave something for me at last. So then she remembered herself, and so gave me her writing tools to lay by, and was just going to say something to me, when on a sudden the New River broke out just at the Eel Pye Shop, by Jack Straw's Castle, and

came with such violence that it swept her away, bed, house, and all, into the Bear Garden, in Houndsditch. So that now we may justly say, that she was drowned at

Ratcliff Highway in earnest; because I was an ear witness to it; and was at a great coffee house at Woodford, drinking lamb's wool, when it was done.

There we composed this Epitaph, to set under her stone, which concludes this wonderful Relation of the Old Woman that was drowned at Ratcliff Highway a fortnight ago.

EPITAPH.

Under this wooden stone,
  She doth remain,
Who liv'd and died,
  And died and liv'd again,
So many times to die
  'Tis strange, say you,
But read this book,
  And then you'll say 'tis true.

FINIS.

Howard and Evans, Printers, 42, *Long-lane, West-smithfield, London.*